

# Partners

## In Progress Preview



[www.epa.gov/swerffr](http://www.epa.gov/swerffr)  
Issue 8  
August 2003

EPA Update on Federal Facility Cleanup and Reuse

### 2002 OSWER National Achievement Awards: Cleanups Prove to Be Win-Win Situtations

**E**PA's Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response recently honored Region 5's Fernald Team and John Chesnutt of Region 9 with Federal Facility Response Outstanding Achievement Awards. The awards recognize leadership, innovation, progress, community outreach, and multiple-agency partnership during federal facility cleanup efforts in 2002.

#### Team Award—Fernald Team, Region 5

Brian Barwick, James Saric, and Eugene Jablonowski make up the Fernald Team—the EPA entity responsible for overseeing the cleanup of the Fernald Superfund site, the first environmental cleanup facility in the DOE complex. The Fernald site is a 1,050-acre facility, located approximately 18 miles northwest of Cincinnati, Ohio. DOE operated the facility from 1951-1991, when high purity uranium was produced in support of national defense programs.

The Fernald cleanup project, expected to cost \$4 billion by its completion in 2006, poses a great challenge due to its size, expense, level of contamination, and technical complexity. Region 5's Fernald Team assumed a substantial leadership role, working extensively with DOE to develop and implement various strategies to expedite cleanup activities.

The team faced a monumental challenge in disposing of 8,900 cubic yards of radon-generating material, all of which was contained in two silos that were well past their constructed life span and in danger of collapsing. To avoid the potential hazards of workers treating waste material in unstable structures, EPA and DOE decided to construct an interim storage unit next to the two dilapidated silos. With the interim unit complete, the team expects that all material from the two silos will be successfully transferred to the interim unit by 2004, greatly reducing the principal hazard on the site.

During 2002, the Fernald team also helped oversee the completion of a Radon Control System, which siphons radon gas from the two silos and the interim storage unit, providing additional safety measures to workers performing waste treatment. These innovative procedures contributed to Fernald workers setting a new safety record for the site, with 10 million consecutive safe work hours and 1,000 consecutive days without a lost time injury or accident. This record helped the Fernald site earn the lowest OSHA recordable injury rate within the DOE complex.

The Fernald Team also ensured a successful project by reaching out to the surrounding community. Through extensive community involvement, sponsored educational outreach programs, and significant charity donations, the Fernald Citizens Advisory Board has become recognized as a model for community based decision-making, both within the DOE complex and internationally. To further demonstrate their commitment to the community, Fernald employees and contractors donated a combined total of \$516,000 during 2002 to charity, scholarship funds, and civic, education, arts, and health and human services programs.

#### Individual Award—John Chesnutt, Region 9

For seven years, John Chesnutt served as EPA's Remedial Project Manager (RPM) at Ford Ord, a closed National Priorities List military base of approximately 27,000 acres located near Monterey, CA. Cleanup efforts and property transfer at Ford Ord are extremely complicated due to large quantities of unexploded ordnance (UXO). Due to the environmental setting and the potential hazards related to munitions, cleanup at Fort Ord has been embroiled in controversy. As a result of several lawsuits against Fort Ord, the Army was precluded from performing ordnance cleanup as part of the Removal Actions, and as a result, an Interim Action Record of Decision (ROD) was proposed for ordnance clearance at only the highest risk former ordnance sites.

As the EPA RPM, Chesnutt assumed a major leadership role in resolving the critical issues involved in the Interim Action ROD. In addition to the technical issues, such as ordnance detection technology, depth of clearance, and disposal alternatives, Fort Ord was faced with an extremely volatile issue with the local community regarding how to remove the dense vegetation prior to the ordnance removal. While prescribed burning is the most effective and safe method for vegetation clearance, several community members strongly objected due to concerns about the associated health risks of smoke exposure and the risks of the fires burning out of control.

As a recognized technical expert in the UXO area, Chesnutt was the coordinator of the Strategic Management Analysis and Requirements and Technology (SMART) team—part of an agreement that established a partnership between the Army and regulators, focusing on UXO issues at Fort Ord. Over the past year, Chesnutt demonstrated a remarkable ability to balance several sensitive and complex issues, ultimately culminating in the signature of the Interim Action ROD, which was a critical step in allowing the Army to initiate ordnance cleanup.

With an understanding of the complex issues associated with UXO cleanup and a desire to address community concerns, Chesnutt was instrumental in convincing the Army that significant outreach efforts were necessary before EPA could sign the Interim Action ROD and initiate ordnance clearing. In addition to monthly

meetings on the Proposed Plan, EPA and the Army sponsored a series of comprehensive symposia on the specific issues of ordnance clearing and prescribed burning, in which Chetsnutt presented EPA's official position. Also included in Chetsnutt's outreach strategy was an Army-funded voluntary relocation program for community members concerned about the potential health effects during the burn. This unprecedented initiative, along with the other extensive outreach culminated in community acceptance that vegetative burning was necessary to adequately prepare the ordnance areas for clearance.

## **Stakeholder Efforts Earn Anacostia an Urban River Pilot Project**

On April 21, EPA and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) announced the selection of the Anacostia River as the first of eight urban river restoration pilot projects under the Urban Rivers Restoration Initiative. Through a competitive process, reviewers selected the Anacostia project based on its comprehensive restoration plan, which includes restoring neighboring wetlands, expanding forest coverage, redeveloping underused brownfields properties along the banks, and expanding public and stakeholder involvement.

The Anacostia, which flows through the District of Columbia and Maryland, is often referred to as the region's "Forgotten River." While not as well-known as the Potomac, it was never forgotten by the members of the Anacostia Watershed Toxics Alliance (AWTA), who have quietly worked to improve the river's prognosis since 1999.

Along with efforts to revitalize the river's waterfront community and a \$1.3 billion plan to improve the city's environmentally unsound combined sewer system, AWTA was cited as one of the keys to the project's selection as a pilot project by EPA. The volunteer group is a partnership of over 25 public and private organizations which seek to address the dangerous concentrations of toxins in the sediments of the Anacostia Watershed.

Having completed its initial data gathering phases, AWTA has entered the third and final phase of its plan, which will implement several remedial actions to clean up the river. The first major component of this phase is the placement of a reactive cap on key areas of the river bottom. This permanent dense clay cap will filter and contain contaminants already present and entering the river. Additionally, spring and summer of 2003 will see the implementation of several low-impact development projects, including measures to reduce the amount of pavement near the river in order to allow for more natural ground filtering of water and sediment bound for the river.

As one of the nation's 10 most polluted rivers, the Anacostia continues to face contamination from polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), pesticides, heavy metals, and raw sewage discharges from combined sewer overflows. While AWTA's three-phase project may be close to completion, its selection as an Urban River Pilot by EPA and USACE is sure to increase public awareness of the problems facing the Anacostia, and guarantee that it will never again be called the capital's "Forgotten River."

## **OSWER's Five Priorities**

As OSWER's Assistant Administrator, Marianne Lamont Horinko recently announced the following "Five Priorities" for EPA's Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response.

"My five priorities form the foundation of OSWER's commitment to protect human health and the environment, encourage greater environmental stewardship, and promote environmental justice in all programs and policies," said Horinko. Horinko is currently the EPA Acting Administrator.

### **Emergency Response and Homeland Security**

OSWER's Emergency Response Program provides the people and skills necessary to respond to national security threats.

### **One Cleanup Program**

The One Cleanup Program (OCP) is OSWER's vision for how different cleanup programs at all levels of government can work together to improve the coordination, speed, and effectiveness of cleanups at the nation's contaminated sites.

### **Land Revitalization**

The Land Revitalization Agenda (LRA) promotes the reuse of once-contaminated sites in order to revitalize America's communities.

### **Energy Recovery, Recycling & Waste Minimization**

The Resource Conservation Challenge (RCC) is a major cross-Agency initiative that identifies innovative, flexible, and more protective ways to conserve natural resources.

### **Workforce Development**

OSWER is committed to developing the full potential of its workforce by encouraging creativity and innovation, providing career development opportunities, and assuring that a diverse pool of qualified candidates is available for all OSWER job opportunities.

Look for more information concerning OSWER's Five Priorities in the next edition of *Partners in Progress*.

---

**B**eginning with Issue #8, *Partners In Progress* will be available in both print and online electronic formats. By providing our latest news electronically, FFRRO will further the goals of the Resource Conservation Challenge by conserving valuable natural resources. If you wish to receive e-mail notification of new online *PIP* issues, please send an email to <[young.dianna@epa.gov](mailto:young.dianna@epa.gov)>.

---

